

Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects

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Summary record of the 1st meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 12 November 2015, at 10 a.m.

Temporary Chair: Mr. Burski (Poland)
Chair: Mr. Aryasinha (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Opening of the meeting

1. **The Temporary Chair** declared open the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. He said that he welcomed the discussions at the second informal meeting of experts on the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), which had dealt in particular with various technical matters, the challenges to be overcome in the area of international humanitarian law and the main ethical issues. He also welcomed the representatives of States participating in the Meeting through the Sponsorship Programme, namely the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Tunisia.

Confirmation of the nomination of the Chair of the Meeting

2. **The Temporary Chair** recalled that, at the 2014 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, it had been decided to nominate Ambassador Ravinatha Aryasinha of Sri Lanka as Chair-designate of the 2015 Meeting, as indicated in paragraph 38 of the final document of the 2014 Meeting (CCW/MSP/2014/9). He took it that the Meeting wished to confirm his nomination.

3. *It was so decided.*

Mr. Aryasinha (Sri Lanka) took the Chair.

4. **The Chair** said that, while conventional weapons had less dramatic effects and a narrower reach than nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction, they continued to cause tremendous harm across the world, in particular to civilian populations, due to their widespread use in armed conflicts, non-State actors' easy access to them and the possibility of improvising such weapons with a view to causing great injury. Significant progress had been made within the framework of the Convention in developing appropriate responses to emerging technologies and methods of warfare, as evidenced by the successful negotiations that had led to the adoption of Protocol IV and Protocol V. In other areas, for example cluster munitions, the results had fallen short of expectations.

5. Since becoming Chair-designate in November 2014, he had worked closely with past chairs, delegations and civil society and international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to achieve the objectives of the Convention. Those efforts had focused on three main areas: open briefings with the League of Arab States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and bilateral consultations with prospective States Parties on the universalization of the Convention; consultations on lethal autonomous weapons systems with a view to advancing the dialogue on the issue; and coordination with States on preparations for the Fifth Review Conference. As a result of the obligations set out in the amended Protocol II and in Protocol V, States emerging from conflict were making greater efforts to clear landmines and explosive remnants of war. Capacity-building remained at the centre of all efforts to contain the devastating effects of such weapons. National reporting mechanisms and compliance by States Parties in that regard would continue to serve as a confidence-building measure among States Parties.

Adoption of the agenda

6. **The Chair** drew attention to the provisional agenda contained in document CCW/MSP/2015/1. He took it that the Meeting wished to adopt it.

7. *It was so decided.*

Confirmation of the rules of procedure

8. **The Chair** suggested that the meeting should adopt the same rules of procedure as the Fourth Review Conference, as contained in document CCW/CONF.IV/2. He recalled that in accordance with the decision taken at the 2013 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, as contained in paragraph 30 of its final document (CCW/MSP/2013/10), rule 3 of the rules of procedure requiring the submission of formal credentials would be suspended. Suspension of a rule was in accordance with rule 52 of the rules of procedure. He said that he took it that the Meeting wished to adopt the rules of procedure.

9. *It was so decided.*

Confirmation of the nomination of the Secretary-General of the Meeting

10. **The Chair** said that, in accordance with article 14 of the rules of procedure, Mr. Marco Kalbusch, Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Geneva Branch, had been nominated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to serve as Secretary-General of the Meeting. He took it that the Meeting wished to confirm that nomination.

11. *It was so decided.*

12. **The Chair** said that Ms. Hine-Wai Loose would serve as Secretary of the Meeting.

13. **Mr. Møller** (Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva) said that it was an honour for him to transmit the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. In the message, the Secretary-General said that he was pleased to greet the delegations attending the conferences under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, amended Protocol II and Protocol V. The States Parties would have to make crucial decisions and set the stage for the 2016 Fifth Review Conference. A number of issues demanded urgent action. First, in order to make the Convention universal, he called on all States not yet parties to join without delay. Second, he urged States Parties to Protocol V to curb the increasing global contamination caused by explosive remnants of war. Third, it was critical for States Parties to amended Protocol II to continue their efforts to address the rising use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Fourth, anti-vehicle mines continued to be a largely unregulated weapon and he urged States Parties to resolve that matter. In using new technologies, States must ensure respect for the basic principles of international humanitarian law. In that context he strongly supported States Parties' efforts to address the challenge posed by lethal autonomous weapons systems and urged them to pursue structured deliberations on that matter.

14. Speaking in his capacity as Director-General, he said that he had closely followed discussions and developments regarding lethal autonomous weapons systems. In a statement before the First Committee of the General Assembly in 2015, he had raised that issue and had urged developing countries to join in the discussions and States Parties to seize the opportunity provided by the Fifth Review Conference to make progress in that regard.

Organization of work, including that of any subsidiary body of the Meeting

15. **The Chair** drew attention to the provisional programme of work (CCW/MSP/2015/2) and the annotated provisional programme of work (CCW/MSP/2015/2/Add.1). He said that during the general exchange of views he hoped that observer States would provide updates on their progress towards acceding to the Convention and the High Contracting Parties would take stock of their efforts to promote universalization and hold an initial discussion on preparations for the Fifth Review Conference. He suggested taking a flexible approach to the programme of work and asked

delegations to be ready to consider agenda items ahead of their scheduled time. He took it that the Meeting wished to proceed in that manner.

16. *It was so decided.*

General exchange of views

An Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and Its Annexed Protocols

Preparations for the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention

17. **The Chair** drew attention to the report entitled “Promoting universality of the Convention and its Protocols” (CCW/MSP/2015/4), which outlined universalization activities during that year. He recalled that, at the Fourth Review Conference, the High Contracting Parties had agreed to An Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and Its Annexed Protocols with a view to promoting the Convention and its Protocols, especially through their bilateral contacts. Turning to preparations for the Fifth Review Conference, he suggested that Main Committee I should review the scope and operation of the Convention and its annexed Protocols, consider any proposals for the Convention and its existing Protocols and prepare and consider the final documents. Main Committee II should consider proposals for additional protocols to the Convention and other proposals.

18. **Mr. Mercado** (Argentina) said that his delegation attached particular importance to the issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM) and hoped that the renewed negotiations on that issue would lead to the adoption of a new and legally binding international instrument on the use, production and transfer of such mines. Argentina had a regulatory framework that was applicable by its armed forces for the demarcation, marking and registration of anti-vehicle mines, which should be detectable and monitored at all times by military personnel. The use of lethal autonomous weapons systems must, for ethical reasons, be limited. Developments on the battlefield, the presence of civilians, weaknesses in communications and command systems and changes in enemy behaviour were factors that could lead to wrong decisions being taken by such weapons systems because of initial settings that were no longer relevant. The scope for such errors could be limited so long as human judgment continued to prevail in conflict situations. The issue of LAWS should be taken up by Main Committee II at the Fifth Review Conference. There was also a need to consider the reasons why some countries had not yet acceded to the Convention. Furthermore, with a view to evaluating the Sponsorship Programme, as in 2014, there should be a follow-up assessment of the percentage of States having benefited from the Programme that had acceded to the Convention.

19. **Mr. Sørensen** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that he wished to stress the importance of universalization of the Convention and its annexed Protocols. He encouraged all States that had not yet ratified or acceded to those instruments to do so in the near future and also stressed the importance of compliance with the provisions of the Convention and its annexed Protocols, in particular the transparency mechanism through the annual compliance reports. He welcomed the meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems in April 2015, which had continued the discussions initiated by France in 2014. He thanked the delegation of Germany and Ambassador Biontino in particular for leading the discussions in 2015. The meetings of experts over the past two years had provided an opportunity to address the issue of LAWS from a legal, ethical, technical and operational

perspective. He welcomed the important civil society contributions to those discussions. Important questions remained, however, and he looked forward to continued discussions in the context of the Convention.

20. With regard to mines other than anti-personnel mines and the protection of civilians, he reiterated his delegation's concern about the humanitarian impact and serious consequences for social and economic development that the indiscriminate and disproportionate use those weapons had. At the same time, it was important to strike a balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations while acknowledging that MOTAPM could be used as legitimate weapons provided that appropriate safeguards were in place to ensure the protection of civilian populations in accordance with international humanitarian law. Further discussion on MOTAPM within the framework of the Convention could therefore be valuable. His delegation was also concerned about the worldwide use of improvised explosive devices by illegal armed groups, terrorists and other unauthorized entities and at their effects, especially at the national level, including on civilian populations. The European Union valued highly the discussions on that topic by the Group of Experts under amended Protocol II.

21. **Mr. Kairamo** (Finland) said that landmines, IEDs and other explosive weapons continued to be a grave threat around the world. Amended Protocol II was, together with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention), an important legal tool. Finland was fully committed to its obligations under those instruments. He was pleased to inform the Meeting that, on 18 August 2015, Finland had completed the destruction of its stockpile of anti-personnel mines, one year ahead of the target date, thus meeting its obligations under article 4 of the Ottawa Convention. In accordance with article 3 of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Finland would retain 16,500 anti-personnel mines for training in mine detection, clearance and destruction. Finland had also actively supported countries with serious mine problems for many decades, including Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Laos, Somalia and South Sudan, and would continue to support humanitarian mine action despite significant budget cuts in the coming year. As States had an obligation to assess the legality of new weapons systems, his Government would welcome further discussions on LAWS within the framework of the Convention.

22. **Mr. Kim** Young-moo (Republic of Korea) said that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons could be enhanced by increased synergy with the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which had recently entered into force. The complex security environment of the Republic of Korea had prevented it from acceding to either the Ottawa Convention or the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). It nevertheless recognized the nature and impact of anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions and was committed to limiting the use and effects of those conventional weapons. In addition to those controls and restrictions, his Government had demonstrated its commitment at the bilateral and multilateral level to mine action and assistance to victims across the globe. With regard to universalization of the Convention, it was considering taking part in the Sponsorship Programme in order to support the involvement of developing countries in meetings and activities relating to the Convention. His delegation was in favour of continued efforts to clarify and better understand the technology and implications of lethal autonomous weapons systems and for extending the mandate of the meeting of experts on that topic. Furthermore, the issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPM) was a critical area that must be examined by the High Contracting Parties in close collaboration with one another.

23. **Mr. Biontino** (Germany) said that his Government wished to call upon all High Contracting Parties to accede to the amended article 1 of the Convention, which extended the scope of application of the Convention to the most common current type of armed conflict — conflict that was not of an international nature. His delegation welcomed the

continuation of thorough and systematic international debate on lethal autonomous weapons systems. The second informal meeting of experts held in Geneva in May 2015 had demonstrated the international community's interest in that issue. He stressed that it was indispensable to maintain human control over the decision to kill another human being. The call for increased transparency, oversight and accountability made in the recent study of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on armed unmanned aerial vehicles was a step in the right direction. It would be worthwhile to discuss new confidence-building measures, such as the exchange of information on national regulations, and possible procedures for early detection of violations in the use of LAWS. In 2014, his Government had spent approximately 13 million euros for mine clearance, risk education for civilian populations and the rehabilitation and the social and economic reintegration of victims of unexploded ordnance. More must be done to achieve a better understanding of the positions, policies and practices of States with regard to the use of explosive weapons and military operations in densely populated areas where there were both military targets and protected persons and objects.

24. **Mr. Fu Cong** (China) said that the legal framework for conventional arms control must be further strengthened and improved while ensuring respect for the principle of achieving a balance between security requirements and humanitarian concerns. His Government had always submitted its national reports on schedule and participated actively in the meetings of experts under the Protocols to the Convention. It attached great importance to universalization of the Convention and had allocated \$100,000 annually to the Sponsorship Programme to support the participation of developing countries in the meetings and activities within the framework of the Convention. It also actively supported international humanitarian mine clearance efforts and, during the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, held at New York in September 2015, President Xi Jinping had announced that his Government would undertake 10 mine clearance programmes over the next five years. Since 1998, it had provided such assistance to nearly 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In 2015, it had organized demining training courses in Ethiopia, Myanmar, Sudan and Zambia during which 70 persons had been trained.

25. The international community must devote greater attention to lethal autonomous weapons systems and discuss in depth all aspects related to such weapons, in particular with regard to the scope and applicability of international law. His delegation supported dealing with that issue within the framework of the Convention. The concerns of all countries, including developing countries, must be taken into account. Anti-vehicle mines continued to be an important element in the legitimate means of defence of many States. The number of civilian victims of those mines was in no way comparable to the number of civilian victims of anti-personnel mines. Universal implementation of Protocol II in good faith would lessen the humanitarian concerns relating to anti-vehicle mines. His delegation therefore considered that there was no need to reopen discussion of that issue.

26. **Mr. Román** (Nicaragua) said that it was urgent to achieve full disarmament, which included not only nuclear weapons but also all weapons of mass destruction and the production and stockpiling of bacteriological and toxin weapons, whose use was contrary to the fundamental principles of international law and international humanitarian law and undermined international security. It was increasingly clear that States must make a real commitment to meeting disarmament goals. It was very worthwhile for States to exchange experience and good practices on that issue. Article 10 of Special Act No. 510 on the Monitoring and Regulation of Special Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials contained a list of weapons whose import, distribution, transfer, possession, shipping and transit through the country were prohibited. There was a need for in-depth study of all the technical, legal and military aspects of lethal autonomous weapons systems. There was no guarantee that such systems could distinguish civilians from combatants or that the principles of proportionality and precaution set out in international

humanitarian law would be respected. So long as such systems were not prohibited by international instruments, their use must continue to be subject to existing international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

27. **Ms. Ayling** (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said that her Government welcomed the discussions and outputs of the various meetings of experts held during the previous year, including on improvised explosive devices and on lethal autonomous weapons systems. She fully supported the conclusions and recommendations of the High Contracting Parties to amended Protocol II, which would facilitate further progress on the issue of IEDs. Turning to the 2016 Review, she said that her Government supported a meeting schedule that was efficient and allowed States Parties to discuss all issues in detail but that was also cost-effective given the current financial climate. For example, a one-week rather than two-week conference should be sufficient and the informal meetings of experts on amended Protocol II and on Protocol V could be limited to one day.

28. **Ms. Janjua** (Pakistan) said that Pakistan was a party to the five Protocols to the Convention and complied with their provisions. It had submitted all outstanding reports on compliance with those Protocols and remained committed to meeting its obligations under the Convention. Her Government was proud of its active contribution to mine clearance and removal of the explosive remnants of war in various parts of the world, in particular in the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations, to which it was one of the largest contributors. States Parties to the Convention continued to have widely diverging views on the issue of anti-vehicle mines, in particular their scope, definition and transfer and matters relating to cooperation and assistance. Her delegation considered such weapons to be a legitimate means of defence that helped deter attacks and the offensive use of force, particularly in situations where there was a military imbalance with regard to conventional weapons. Humanitarian concerns arose because of the irresponsible use of such weapons, by non-State actors in particular. Their use by States Parties was already governed by the provisions of the Convention. There was an urgent need to conclude a separate Protocol to the Convention to prohibit the further development and use of lethal autonomous weapons systems, whose deployment would be illegal, unethical and inhumane and constitute a destabilizing factor for international peace and security. It would be useful to explore that issue further under the Convention and her delegation stood ready to take part in any such efforts, whether in a meeting of experts or a group of governmental experts dealing with that subject. She agreed with the Chair's suggestion that, during the Fifth Review Conference, Main Committee II should deal with the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems. As for the length of the Conference, she said that there must be sufficient time for an in-depth review of all the items on the agenda. She thanked the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement who were Parties to the Convention for the confidence they had shown in her by nominating her for the Presidency of the Fifth Review Conference.

29. **Mr. Áviles** (Ecuador) said that the Convention and its annexed Protocols were fundamental instruments of international humanitarian law. Convinced that international standards must be made universal, his Government supported the Accelerated Plan of Action for the Universalization of the Convention and Its Annexed Protocols adopted at the Fourth Review Conference. It also supported the Sponsorship Programme established under the Convention. He thanked Ambassador Biontino for his able leadership during the informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems held in April 2015. Those weapons systems, which were not in conformity with the principles and standards of international humanitarian law, must be prohibited. There was a need to further consider the issue in depth. He wished to thank the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) for organizing, on 6 November 2015, a meeting on anti-vehicle mines and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute for publishing its study on that issue. That study had shown that anti-vehicle mines, the use of which was not regulated, posed a growing risk for the communities affected, including those near roads, and undermined the development of

agriculture, infrastructure and transport. The issue of mines other than anti-personnel mines must therefore remain on the agenda at the Meeting of High Contracting Parties. With regard to the organization of the Fifth Review Conference, he said that Main Committee II should take up the issue of LAWS and MOTAPM. He welcomed arrangements for audio recording of the meetings, which might make it possible to decide, at the next Meeting of the High Contracting Parties, to eliminate summary records, which would result in a 13 per cent reduction in the overall cost of the meetings.

30. **Mr. Shutenko** (Ukraine), accompanying his statement with a digital slide presentation, said that in spite of the security problems it faced as a result of the hybrid war against it, Ukraine was in full compliance with its obligations under the Convention and its annexed Protocols and was doing everything possible to destroy and dispose of explosive remnants of war, in accordance with article 3 of Protocol V. It did not produce, supply, sell or use mines or other explosive devices. Much of Ukraine's territory was contaminated with the explosive remnants of war, in particular the south-east of the country. To date, the State Emergency Service had cleared more than 8,800 hectares of land and 40 hectares of water in eastern Ukraine. It had inspected 1,000 infrastructure facilities, including more than 100 schools. As a result, more than 40,000 explosive remnants of war, including more than 630 especially dangerous booby traps, IEDs and other remote controlled explosive devices deliberately installed by Russian-backed terrorists and armed groups, in violation of Protocol II to the Convention, had been destroyed. Every day new explosive remnants of war contaminated its territory, causing more casualties among the civilian population than among the military. If one added together the territory occupied by Russian-supported terrorist groups and the territories controlled by the authorities of Ukraine that had been shelled by those terrorists, the total area where explosive remnants of war might be found was some 21,500 km². His Government was concerned about the use that might be made of the anti-personnel mines warehoused in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, which the Russian Federation had annexed illegally. In an effort to assist the victims of explosive devices, his Government had launched a psychological rehabilitation and vocational training programme for persons with disabilities that would provide assistance to 45,000 victims of mines and IEDs in the current year. Since 2014, mines had injured 542 persons, including 15 children, in the provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk. His delegation highly valued the assistance provided by its partners for the clearing of explosive devices. In order to ensure the security of its population and the functioning of its infrastructure and safe demining operations, his delegation looked forward to increased cooperation with the international community, in particular knowledge-sharing on technology for the detection and destruction of explosive remnants of war.

31. **Mr. Sano** (Japan) said that his delegation was working to promote universalization of the Convention, in particular through bilateral meetings with South-East Asian States. He commended Ambassador Biontino for his dynamic leadership of the April 2015 informal meeting of experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems and underscored the need for further discussion of such issues as the definition of those weapons systems and the concept of meaningful human control with a view to achieving consensus on them. The Convention provided the most appropriate framework for dealing with the issue of MOTAPM. His delegation supported the participation of non-governmental organizations and civil society in the work of States within the framework of the Convention, as provided for in the rules of procedure.

32. **Mr. Herraiz** (Spain) said that Spain aligned itself with the statement of the European Union. On 29 July 2015, his Government had adopted Act No. 27/2015 on a complete ban of anti-personnel mines, cluster bombs and other weapons having similar effects, thus making all weapons that caused unacceptable suffering for civilian populations subject to the same legal provisions. Over the previous five years, his Government had allocated more than 7 million euros to cooperation activities for the clearing, removal and

destruction of weapons and victim assistance. With regard to the Fifth Review Conference, his Government supported the proposal for issues to be addressed by the Main Committees. Main Committee II should deal with the issue of lethal autonomous weapons systems. The degree of autonomy of those systems must be better defined, taking into account whether their purpose was offensive or defensive, their lethal nature, respect for international law and international humanitarian law, and also the principles of necessity, proportionality, distinction and precaution.

33. **Ms. Bard** (Sweden) said that Sweden aligned itself with the statement of the European Union. Her Government's approach to disarmament and international security put human beings at its centre. The Convention and its annexed Protocols were an effective means to address developments in weapons technology. It attached great importance to participation by non-governmental organizations and civil society in meetings held within the framework of the Convention. It would be relevant and valuable to further discuss the issue of anti-vehicle mines from the perspective of international humanitarian law in the context of the Convention. She welcomed the opportunity to continue discussions on lethal autonomous weapons systems at the April 2015 meeting of experts and considered that human beings should always bear the ultimate responsibility for life and death decisions. Her delegation would support the establishment, at the 2016 Review Conference, of a governmental group of experts on that issue.

34. **Ms. Londoño Soto** (Colombia) said that Colombia had deposited its instrument of ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 10 September 2015, which showed its commitment to disarmament and respect for international law. Her Government was working to clear weapons banned by the Convention and its annexed Protocols from its entire territory, in particular the IEDs used by illegal armed groups, provide assistance to victims and undertake preventive risk education activities with communities. More than 2 million m² of land had been cleared and more than 1,585 explosive devices destroyed as a result of humanitarian mine clearance operations. The issue of assistance to victims as subjects of law should be included in discussions held under the Convention. Assistance should be provided in an inclusive manner, in accordance with the principles of equity and equality. Her delegation supported the organization of meetings on LAWS for the purpose of establishing an internationally accepted definition of those weapons systems and the concept of "autonomous" and "meaningful human control".

35. **Mr. Mushayavanhu** (Observer for Zimbabwe) said that, although it was not yet a party to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, his Government welcomed the opportunity to take part in the discussions. It was concerned about the development of lethal autonomous weapons systems and their possible military use. In situations in which LAWS were deployed in armed conflicts, there was a need to ensure meaningful human control of those systems in accordance with international humanitarian law; it would be unacceptable to let machines take life and death decisions about human beings. His delegation called for a ban on LAWS as a pre-emptive measure, even though it was aware that some States already enjoyed an advantage in deploying such military assets.

36. **Mr. Mati** (Italy) said that he aligned himself with the statement of the European Union. His delegation would continue to support the Accelerated Plan of Action on Universalization of the Convention and Its Annexed Protocols and welcomed recent progress in that regard. Deeply concerned about the humanitarian effects of explosive remnants of war and explosive devices, his Government had allocated more than 15 million euros since setting up a mine action fund in 2001 to integrated mine action programmes that included mine clearing, destruction of stockpiles and assistance to victims. In 2014 it had funded mine action projects in several countries for a total of 1.9 million euros; in 2015 it would spend 3.5 million euros on such efforts. His delegation was concerned at the growing political and humanitarian effects of the use of IEDs; that topic should be discussed further

with a view to exploring ways to improve international cooperation in countering the threat posed by IEDs. He welcomed the work done at the 2014 and 2015 informal meetings of experts on emerging technologies in the field of lethal autonomous weapons systems; work in that area must continue. Lastly, his delegation wished to emphasize the fundamental role played by civil society in the universalization and implementation of the Convention and its annexed Protocols.

37. **Ms. Jayasuriya** (Sri Lanka) said that Sri Lanka had suffered from three decades of internal armed conflict and was well aware of the effects of conventional weapons on civilian populations and why they were called in common terms “inhumane weapons”. Since the end of the conflict in 2009, it had had to deal with the challenges posed by 1.3 million landmines, anti-personnel mines, IEDs and unexploded ordnance in more than 640 villages in the former conflict areas. Her Government had launched an intensive demining campaign, supported by its international partners, in order to ensure the speedy return of the internally displaced persons. National capacity for demining actions had been strengthened as a result and more than 1,500 families had been able to return home. Her Government stood ready to share its experience and best practices with interested countries. She wondered why existing international humanitarian law did not suffice to fully address matters related to accountability for the indiscriminate use of MOTAPM, 70 per cent of the victims of which were civilians. The technical measures suggested, for example enhanced detectability and self-destruct features, could reduce the injurious impact of such weapons. All States should soon have prompt access to that technology at a reasonable cost; otherwise it would be difficult to reach consensus on MOTAPM, which many countries considered to be legitimate defensive weapons. She was in favour of continued discussion of LAWS within the forum provided by the Convention. As for the Fifth Review Conference, she supported the proposed actions for the Main Committees as indicated in the annotated programme of work. The Review Conference should undertake a comprehensive review of all the Protocols annexed to the Convention and focus on better measures to ensure compliance.

38. **Mr. Piperkov** (Bulgaria) said that he aligned himself with the statement of the European Union. He urged States not yet parties to the Convention or its annexed Protocols to consider ratifying or acceding to them and called on the High Contracting Parties who had not yet done so to accede to the amended article 1 of the Convention, extending its scope and that of the Protocols to include non-international armed conflicts. Recent events and reports of the use of incendiary weapons against civilian populations underscored the importance of universalization and implementation of the Convention and its annexed Protocols. He supported continued discussion of LAWS in the context of the Convention. While concerned by the humanitarian effects of MOTAPM, he said that the right balance must be found between humanitarian concerns and military considerations. The use of those weapons was legitimate if protection of civilians was ensured in accordance with international humanitarian law. Further discussion of that issue would be worthwhile. Lastly, enhanced international cooperation was necessary to respond to the threat posed by IEDs.

39. **Ms. Guitton** (France) said that France aligned itself with the statement of the European Union. Her Government condemned the use of incendiary bombs that were continuing in the Syrian Arab Republic in particular and whose effects of which on civilian populations were unacceptable. It called on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to accede to the Convention, in particular its Protocol III on incendiary weapons. It supported continued discussion of LAWS and considered it necessary to continue to review in detail the definition of such weapons systems and come up with a common understanding of what was meant by “autonomous”. Autonomy implied a complete lack of human control and unpredictability of actions owing to the capacity for adaptation to a complex and changing environment. The work being done in the context of the amended Protocol II on IEDs was

also important. Her delegation, along with the Republic of Moldova, had coordinated the discussions of the Group of Experts on that topic; those discussions should continue with the participation of all in order to identify measures to combat the threat posed by such weapons.

40. **Ms. O'Brien** (Ireland) said that her delegation aligned itself with the statement of the European Union and recalled that one of the targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was to significantly reduce all forms of violence and related deaths everywhere. To that end, conventional arms treaties must be made universal and be strengthened and amended to reflect new technologies and methods of war. Her delegation, which had jointly financed a study on MOTAPM with the United States of America submitted to the High Contracting Parties at the 2014 Meeting, viewed that issue as one of increasingly humanitarian urgency. Amended Protocol II was the only source of regulation specific to those weapons and there was a need to address that shortcoming in international humanitarian law. The use of drones or unmanned aerial vehicles must be governed by international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and discussions in that regard should continue. More must be done to explore how to minimize harm to civilians caused by explosive weapons, for example by addressing the secondary and tertiary effects of their use and by clarifying what was meant by “protected civilian objects” during an armed conflict, an issue that could be addressed within the framework of the Convention. She supported continued discussion of the issue of LAWS. Such systems should remain under effective human control and the discussion of the issue, including technical aspects and any development of the technologies, should be centred on international humanitarian and human rights law. The issue of the use of LAWS in other contexts, for example in law enforcement, must likewise be discussed. It would also be worthwhile to raise the issue of LAWS in other forums, for example the Human Rights Council, and the upcoming Review Conference.

41. **Monsignor Tomasi** (Holy See) said that his delegation found the continuing violations of international humanitarian law to be an alarming development and associated himself with the recent warnings in that regard from the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of ICRC. Implementation of international humanitarian law in practice was a prerequisite for countering the inhumanity of war and armed conflicts. The High Contracting Parties must make a real contribution to respect for and development and promotion of international humanitarian law. Accordingly, he proposed the establishment of a group of governmental experts on lethal autonomous weapons systems, another group on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and a third group for the revision of Protocol III on incendiary weapons.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.